

PATENT
Serial No. 09/632,154

REMARKS

Claims 1-23 are pending in this application. Claims 6, 21, and 22 have been amended. Applicant requests reconsideration of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claim 6 has been amended to correct a minor typographical error.

Office Action, ¶ 2

Claims 4-14 stand rejected as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,491,743 to Shiiro et al ("Shiiro"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

In Shiiro, a conference room list window 64 shows a list of conferences currently going on and a conference attendants window 66. In the window 66, animated characters representing attendants allowed to attend those conferences are arranged and displayed on the display screen 60. To have another operator 18_j attend an ongoing conference, an icon representing the operator 18_j requesting the attendance is moved from the conference attendants window 66 to the virtual conference room window 62 by dragging it with a mouse. All operators 18_j who are dragged into the conference room window 66 are displayed as attending the conference.

As such, Shiiro ascertains which of the operators will be displayed by which of the corresponding icons are dragged into the virtual conference room window 62. Shiiro does not rely on data relating to the motion of the operators in ascertaining which operator is to be displayed. Indeed, as the Examiner stated during the prosecution of the parent case to this application (Serial No. 08/747,420; now U.S. Patent No. 6,219,045 B1), "Shiiro et al. fails to explicitly teach determining a list of avatars [from] a set of avatars to be displayed at each client process." [Office Action, November 29, 1999, page 3]

Claim 4, on the other hand, recites "(b) determining from the data a set of the other users' avatars that are to be displayed to the first user" (emphasis added). Shiiro fails to teach or suggest

PATENT
Serial No. 09/632,154

a method that determines, from the data relating to motion of at least some of the other users' avatars from the server process, a set of the other users' avatars that are to be displayed to the first user. As such, Claim 4, and the claims that depend therefrom, are patentable over Shiio.

Similarly, Claim 9 recites "(c) determining from the data received in step (b) a set of the other users' avatars that are to be displayed to the first user" (emphasis added). Shiio fails to teach or suggest a method that determines, from the data relating to motion of at least some of the other users' avatars from the server process, a set of the other users' avatars that are to be displayed to the first user. As such, Claim 9, and the claims that depend therefrom, are patentable over Shiio.

Office Action, ¶ 4

Claims 1-3 and 15-23 stand rejected as obvious over Shiio in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,347,506 to Nitta ("Nitta"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection with regard to Claims 1-3, 15-20, and 23. Applicant has amended Claims 21 and 22.

As described above, Shiio ascertains which of the operators will be displayed by which of the corresponding icons are dragged into the virtual conference room window 62. Shiio does not rely on data relating to the motion of the operators in ascertaining which operator is to be displayed. Indeed, as the Examiner stated during the prosecution of the parent case to this application (Serial No. 08/747,420; now U.S. Patent No. 6,219,045 B1), "Shiio et al. fails to explicitly teach determining a list of avatars [from] a set of avatars to be displayed at each client process." [Office Action, November 29, 1999, page 3]

Nitta also does not teach or suggest ascertaining an avatar to be displayed based on the position of the avatar. Rather, Nitta provides that the animated electronic meeting place has real

PATENT
Serial No. 09/632,154

time 3-D graphics renderings, showing the meeting with all of the participants. (Col. 3, lines 25-32).

Claim 1 recites means “for determining from the positions of the users of the other client processes which of the users to render” (emphasis added). Shiio and Nitta each fail to teach or suggest the recited means for determining from the positions of the users. As such, any combination of these references also lacks a teaching or suggestion. Thus, Claim 1, and the claims that depend therefrom, are patentable over Shiio and Nitta, alone or in combination.

Claim 15 recites the step of “(d) determining, by the second and first client processes, from the data indicating the movement of the first and second avatars, respectively, whether to display the first and second avatars” (emphasis added). Shiio and Nitta each fail to teach or suggest this step of determining from the data indicating the movement of the first and second avatars. As such, any combination of these references also lacks a teaching or suggestion. Thus, Claim 15, and the claims that depend therefrom, are patentable over Shiio and Nitta, alone or in combination.

Claim 18 recites the step of “(d) determining from the data transmitted in step (c), by each client process, at least some of the avatars that are not associated with the client process that are to be displayed” (emphasis added). Shiio and Nitta each fail to teach or suggest this step of determining from the data indicating movement of at least some of the avatars that are not associated with the client process, at least some of the avatars that are not associated with the client process that are to be displayed. As such, any combination of these references also lacks a teaching or suggestion. Thus, Claim 18, and the claims that depend therefrom, are patentable over Shiio and Nitta, alone or in combination.

Amended Claim 21 recites the step of “synchronously disseminating to each of the client processes a packet of information including the data received in step (c) so that the client process

PATENT
Serial No. 09/632,154

can determine from the packet a set of avatars that are to be displayed" (emphasis added). Shiio and Nitta each fail to teach or suggest such a step. As such, any combination of these references also lacks a teaching or suggestion. Thus, Claim 21 is patentable over Shiio and Nitta, alone or in combination.

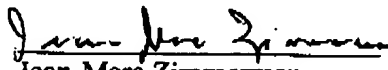
Amended Claim 22 recites the step of "synchronously disseminating to each of the client processes a packet of information including the data received in step (a) so that the client process can determine from the packet a set of avatars that are to be displayed" (emphasis added). Shiio and Nitta each fail to teach or suggest such a step. As such, any combination of these references also lacks a teaching or suggestion. Thus, Claim 22 is patentable over Shiio and Nitta, alone or in combination.

Claim 23 recites that the first client process is operable to "(c)(2) determine from the data received in (c)(1) a set of the other users' avatars that are to be displayed" (emphasis added). Shiio and Nitta each fail to teach or suggest such a limitation. As such, any combination of these references also lacks a teaching or suggestion. Thus, Claim 23 is patentable over Shiio and Nitta, alone or in combination.

For the reasons set forth above, all of the pending claims are patentable over the references of record and are now in condition for allowance. An early allowance of the all claims is earnestly solicited.

Dated: June 11, 2003

Respectfully submitted,


Jean-Marc Zimmerman
Registration No. 36,978
Zimmerman & Levi, LLP
226 St. Paul Street
Westfield, NJ 07090
(908) 654-8000